DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 951 HE 000 302

By-Whittaker, David; Watts, William A.

Psychological Needs and Nonconformity.

California Univ., Berkeley. Center for Research and Development in Higher Education.

Pub Date Dec 67

Note-15p.; Paper delivered at 11th Inter-American Congress of Psychology, held in Mexico City, Mexico, December 18-23, 1967.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.85

Descriptors-Attitudes, *Behavior, *Conformity, *Dropouts, *Higher Education, Needs, *Psychological Needs, Self Actualization, Socially Deviant Behavior, Student Behavior, Values

Identifiers-*Nonstudents

An increasing number of college-age youth are philosophically and behavioristically separated from the traditional middle class and its values. The nonstudent generally has withdrawn from formal education professing disdain for the academic experience and its stifling effects, but is nevertheless attracted to the university as a source of cultural stimulation, acceptance and asylum. Refraining from entering the conventional world of work, the nonstudent lives a marginal existence reflective of his unconventional role. In a comprehensive sociopsychological study of 151 members of the Berkeley nonstudent population, the sample of nonconforming youth was compared to a random sample of 56 Berkeley students. Approximately two-thirds of each group were male and the average age for both groups was 21. The samples responded to a lengthy questionnaire and other psychological instruments. The extremes that emerged in the hierarchical profile are particularly useful for their help in predicting patterns of behavior. The need scales, in conjunction with other data, suggest definite psychological propensities or dispositions to certain actions. Figures of the need scales and a bibliography are included, and characteristics of the nonstudent are discussed with reference to earlier psychological studies on the subject. (JS)

ED026951

PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND NONCONFORMITY

David Whittaker and William A. Watts

Center for Research and Development in Higher Education

University of California

Berkeley, California

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

HE000 302

Psychological Needs and Nonconformity[1]

David Whittaker and William A. Watts

Center for Research and Development in Higher Education

University of California

Berkeley, California

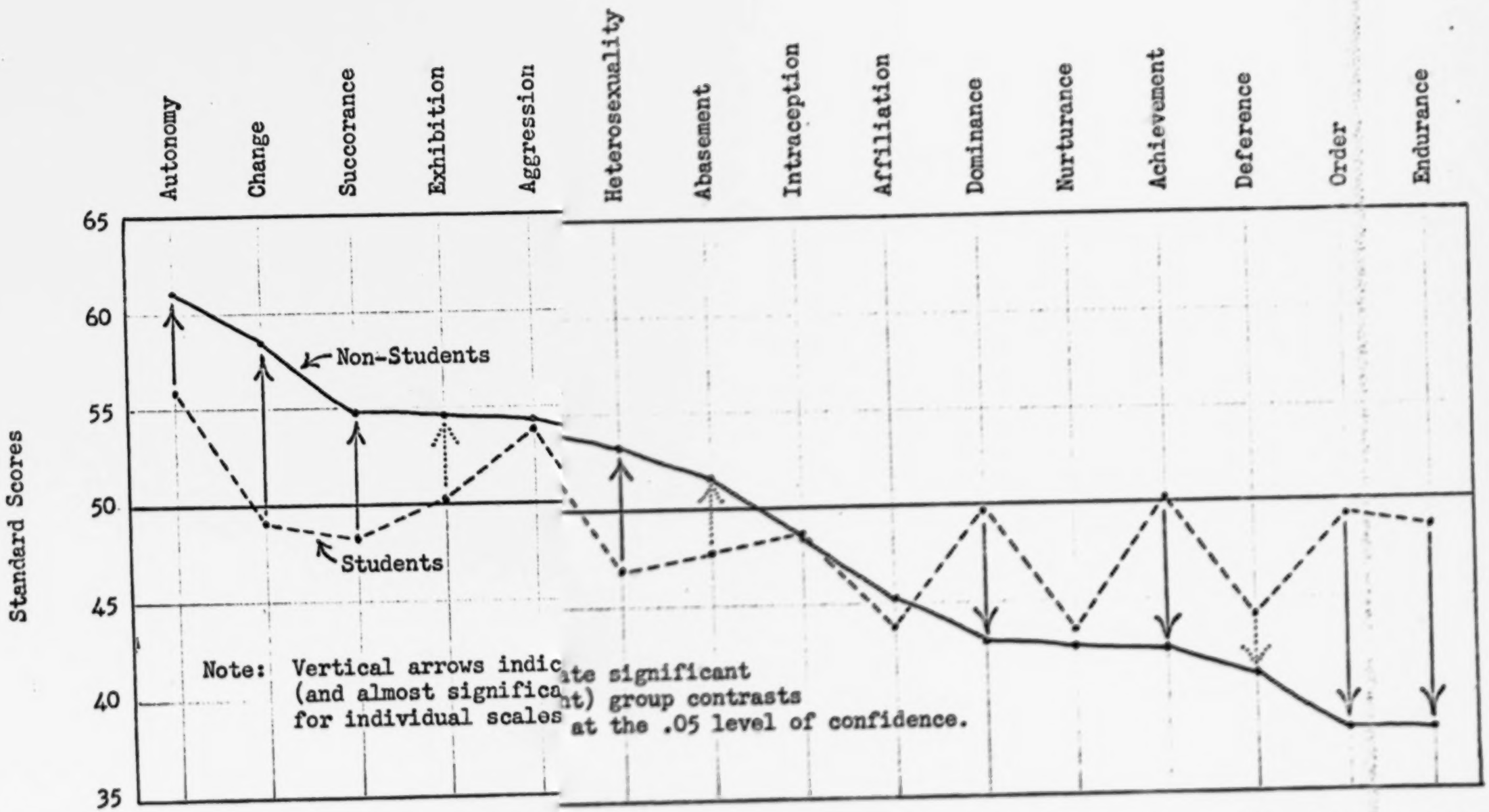
SUMMARY:

Recent literature on the topic of nonconforming youth reflects the interest in the membership of this diverse, and apparently growing, subcultural phenomenon. One such social manifestation, particularly prevalent at the University of California at Berkeley and other centers, is a subculture or "underground" of non-students - collegiate-age youth who are not formally registered as students but who have mingling associations and impacts with student culture and vice versa. Most have had some college education and while often professing disdain for formal academic study and its stifling effects they are attracted nevertheless to the university environs as a source of cultural stimulation, acceptance and asylum. They are particularly nonconforming.

This paper reports part of the psychological data collected in a comprehensive socio-psychological study of 151 members of the Berkeley non-student population. This sample of nonconforming youth was compared to a random sample of 56 students from the student body at UC at Berkeley. Approximately two-thirds of each group were males. The data presented here are the group means obtained from the 15 need scales of the Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrun, 1965) each of which represents a disposition within Murray's (1938) need-press system.

1 This paper was read at the XI Interamerican Congress of Psychology held in Mexico City, December 18 - 23, 1967, and published in the Congress's Proceedings.

ACL NEED SCALES IN HIERARCHICAL RANK FOR NON-STUDENT GROUP MEANS AS CONTRASTED WITH STUDENT GROUP MEANS:



Non-Student Means:	61.1	58.5	54.9	54.7	54.	53.1	51.4	48.3	45.1	42.8	42.7	42.5	41.1	38.1	38.0
Student Means:	56.1	49.2	48.5	50.3	54.	47.1	47.9	48.4	44.0	49.8	43.3	50.1	44.2	49.2	48.7

Data to accompany presentation of paper "Psychological Needs and Nonconformity" by David Whittaker and William A. Watts read at the XI I teramerican Society of Psychology, Mexico City, December 1967.

The group profiles for the male and female distributions were surprisingly similar, particularly for non-students. Similarly striking was the finding that the non-student profile presented a more pronounced form, containing more extremely high and low scores, than the cross-sectional sample of students which tended to remain closer to the norm. In the hierarchical ranking of the non-student needs, the need scales fell roughly into five divisions: (1) Autonomy and Change were the strongest non-student needs; (2) Succorance, Exhibition, Agression and Heterosexuality were moderately strong; (3) Abasement, Intraception and Affiliation were moderate needs; (4) Dominance, Nurturance, Achievement, and Deference were moderately weak needs; and (5) Order and Endurance were the weakest non-student needs of the 15 measured. The non-students were significantly higher than students on 4 of the scales (Autonomy, Change, Succorance and Heterosexuality) and significantly lower on 4 others (Endurance, Order, Achievement and Dominance).

The data is discussed in terms of propensity for withdrawal from formal education and involvement in nonconformist behavior. The psychological and sociological ramifications and interrelationships are alluded to in reference to needs, nonconventionality, alienation and social change.

Psychological Needs and Nonconformity

David Whittaker and William A. Watts

Center for Research and Development in Higher Education

University of California, Berkeley, California 94720

Background:

Recently, both public and academic attention increasingly has been focused in the United States on the phenomenon of alienated, nonconforming, youth cultures, a trend apparently involving increasing numbers of youth within the last decade in all technologically advanced nations (Brown, 1966; Gennrich, 1966). One such social manifestation, among others, is particularly prevalent at the University of California at Berkeley as well as certain other centers of higher learning and is known by the various euphemisms as the "underground", "fringe" or more locally "non-students". They represent a diverse collection of collegiate-age youth who are philosophically and behavioristically separated from the traditional middle class and its values.

The non-student, a term with generally unsympathetic connotations in the public mind, refers to individuals who have withdrawn, indefinitely, from formal education, professing disdain for their academic experience and its stifling effects, but who are nevertheless attracted to the university environs as a source of direct and indirect cultural stimulation, acceptance and asylum. Having refrained from entering the conventional world of work, they live a marginal existence reflective of their unconventional role.

To classify the non-student subculture in too general a way is a disservice to their rich diversity. However, regardless of the individuality of its membership, the major characteristics of the group tend to be seen as being a reaction against social hypocrises, restrictive standards, the materialistic way of life and the dehumanizing influences of modern institutions. Reflective of a basically libertarian society that has developed a subculture of its own, it leans towards existentalism, leftist political theory, intellectualism and aestheticism, pacifism, agnosticism or the more exotic, mystical religions, freer sexual mores, use of such drugs as marijuana and lysergic acid diethylamide, and is visually impressive by the avantguard appearance of its membership (Watts & Whittaker, 1966). In the historical context, they are a contemporary expression within the long tradition of bohemian, rebellious youth, basically non-criminal, succinctly discussed by Matza (1961).

Subjects and Method:

This paper is based on partial data from a comprehensive socio-psychological study of 151 Berkeley non-students who volunteered to undergo intensive probing by responding to a lengthy questionnaire and a number of psychological instruments. Because there was no possibility of obtaining a representative sample of the non-students, estimated to number approximately 3000, since the parameters of this population are so ill-defined and changing, a method referred to by Campbell and Pettigrew (1959) as the "snowball technique" was used. By this method all available accesses into the particular group are initially used and other respondents gained by a referral method. Enough different inroads were used in recruiting the subjects that they likely typify a fairly broad range of this population. All data was collected in small groups and took

several hours to complete. Almost without exception the subjects were conscientious in their responses, uninhibited, and generally stimulated by the material.

For comparative purposes a cross-section of the University of California student body at Berkeley, a rather intellectually elite population of youth, seemed obviously appropriate and was obtained. This random sample of 56 students was, by comparison, more "clean cut" in appearance and tended to be more formal in their behavior with the investigators during and immediately after the data collecting, a stance perhaps defined by their student role. Approximately two-thirds of the subjects in each sample, selected without bias, were males. The average age for the two groups was approx. twenty-one.

Instrumentation:

The original Adjective Check List (ACL) was prepared by Gough in 1952 for use at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research at Berkeley and consisted of 300 adjectives commonly used to describe basic personality attributes. Later, Heilbrun developed a series of experimental scales for the ACL and the collaboration of the two men has resulted in the present 24 scales (Gough & Heilbrun, 1965), each formulated around a single analytic or personological concept, 15 of which represent a disposition within Murray's (1938) need-press system utilized by Heilbrun. It is the use of these need scales that are presented in this paper.

Yielding a wealth of potentially useful information, particularly for personality assessment and psychological counselling, the ACL may be completed in approximately 10 to 15 minutes by subjects instructed to simply check from the list of adjectives those that are frankly self-descriptive. Little resistance or

anxiety is aroused by its format and it is rather interesting to complete. Separate scoring keys, depending on sex and the total number of adjectives checked, are necessary for each scale. Cross-cultural applications have been carried out extensively in Italy and to a lesser extent in South America. French, German and British editions are expected to be applied.

Results:

Figure 1 presents the ACL need scale profile for the non-student sample with the group means arranged in hierarchical order from high to low. The student group means for each scale are contrastingly plotted. As the group profiles for the males and females for each of the two samples were surprisingly similar, almost perfectly so in the case of the non-students, the data was collapsed,for the sake of clarity, without loss in data. A general characteristic equally as striking as the lack of sex difference is the observation that the non-student profile contains more extreme scores, both high and low, and therefore presents a more pronounced distribution of the variables than the student profile which tends to remain closer to the individual scale norms for each sex. The assumption can be made that this is partially a reflection of the greater homogeneity within the non-student sample.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The statistical treatment consisted of first comparing the two samples of non-students and students (orginally, separately for each sex) for over-all differences on the instrument by a generalized analysis of variance. As significant F's were found beyond the .001 level of confidence, the individual scales were then tested in order to note which scales were significantly contributing to the

to the over-all difference. These analyses were made by using Marascuilo's (1966) stringent (in that the over-all alpha level is controlled), multiple comparisons based upon a chi square analog of Scheffe's (1959) multiple comparison method for analysis of variance.

Diagnostically, Figure 1 shows that non-students, compared to students, scored significantly higher on: Autonomy (the need to act independently of others or of social values and expectations), Change (the need to seek novelty of experience and avoid routine), Succorance (the need to solicit sympathy, affection or emotional support from others) and Heterosexuality (the need to seek the company of and derive emotional satisfactions from interactions with opposite-sexed peers). On the other hand, non-students scored significantly lower, and thus suggesting a relative absence of the need, on: Endurance (the need to persist in any task undertaken), Order (the need to place special emphasis on neatness, organization and planning in one's activities), Achievement (the need to strive to be outstanding in pursuits of socially recognized goals) and Dominance (the need to seek and sustain leadership roles in groups or to be influential and controlling in individual relationships).

Discussion:

In the hierarchical ranking of the non-student needs, the need scales fall roughly into five divisions: (1) Autonomy and Change are the strongest non-student needs; (2) Succorance, Exhibition (the need to behave in such a way as to elicit the immediate attention of others), Aggression (the need to engage in behavior that is inconsiderate of others) and Heterosexuality are moderately strong needs; (3) Abasement (the need to express feelings of inferiority through self-criticism , guilt or social impotence), Introception (the need to engage in attempts to understand one's own behavior or the behavior

of others) and Affiliation (the need to seek and sustain numerous personal friendships) are moderate needs; (4) Dominance, Nurturance (the need to engage in behaviors which extend material or emotional benefits to others), Achievement, Deference (the need to seek and sustain subordinate roles in relationships with others) are moderately weak needs; and (5) Order and Endurance are the weakest non-student needs of the 15 needs measured.

The extremes of the hierarchical profile are particularly relevant for the use they may have in the predictive patterns of behavior that can emerge. The need scales, in conjunction with other information, suggest psychological propensities or dispositions to particular actions. The description of the non-students in respect to the need scale data suggests that typical individuals appear to be defined as persons who have strong motivations to seek new experiences and to avoid routine, who act act impulsively and independently of social values and expectations but who, correspondingly, are quite unable to tolerate prolonged effort, to plan their behavior realistically or to apply defensive caution because of an intrinsic lack of motivation and self-discipline.

The resulting profile suggested here is not only very compatible with observational data on the non-students (and thus strengthens the validity of the ACL) but also complements such data by adding further insights. In this light the psychological pressure on such persons to withdraw from formal education, an environment permeated with the conflicting pressure on the student to assume a stance of self-denial, routinized behavior and competitive achievement orientation, is certainly understandable and, indeed, fairly inevitable regardless of basic intellectual ability. In general, such an individual cannot easily satisfy his needs within the academic setting as it is, generally, presently structured.

Such persons will undoubtedly experience varying degrees of ambivalence and alienation in our society. Related to this is the fact that non-student profiles suggest some degree of psychological maladjustment which is, in a circularly fashion, interrelated with the sociological syndrome of inadaptability to conventional social roles.

Until rather recently, individuals, especially youth, suffered in relatively private ways. It is a cliche, perhaps true, that life was simpler in former times. Nevertheless, modern society's failure to reasonable provide for an effective transition into responsible adulthood for many young people has lead to increasing numbers of alienated youth. Simultaneously with this failure is the establishment of increased communication and the development of youth's own subcultures as a protective manifestation of pychological and social needs now not only possible because of, but a reality due to, the very affuence of socity.

The conditions of peer group formation and group identity are applicable to this phenomenon within Newcomb's (1962) theoretical framework. The subculture(s) acquire socializing power to encourage and reward conformity to its mores and entering youth disposed towards nonconformity find in such groups a supportive vehicle for accelerating the bread with family and traditional values. Watts and Whittaker (1966) previously have shown that this non-student sample is significantly estranged from their parents in terms of intellectual ideas, religious and political beliefs and future goals. Musgrove (1964) stresses the point that many adults assume that young people have widely rejected the standards and authority of adults and are even hostile towards adults, yet social research has shown, with great clarity, that the rejection was initiated by the adults. Kelley (1963) states, in this same line of thought,

that such a rejection by adult society and the resultant increase in conflict between adults and youth is one of the saddest aspects of our culture. Youth are thus confined, segregated, to a society of their own peers and excluded from serious and responsible participation in the world of their elders who are reluctant to share real power with them or allow them to "meddle" with adult concerns. When youth are separated from the adult world and delayed entry into adult life, they are likely to constitute potentially alienated, rebellious, and/or deviant ones.

Concluding Remark:

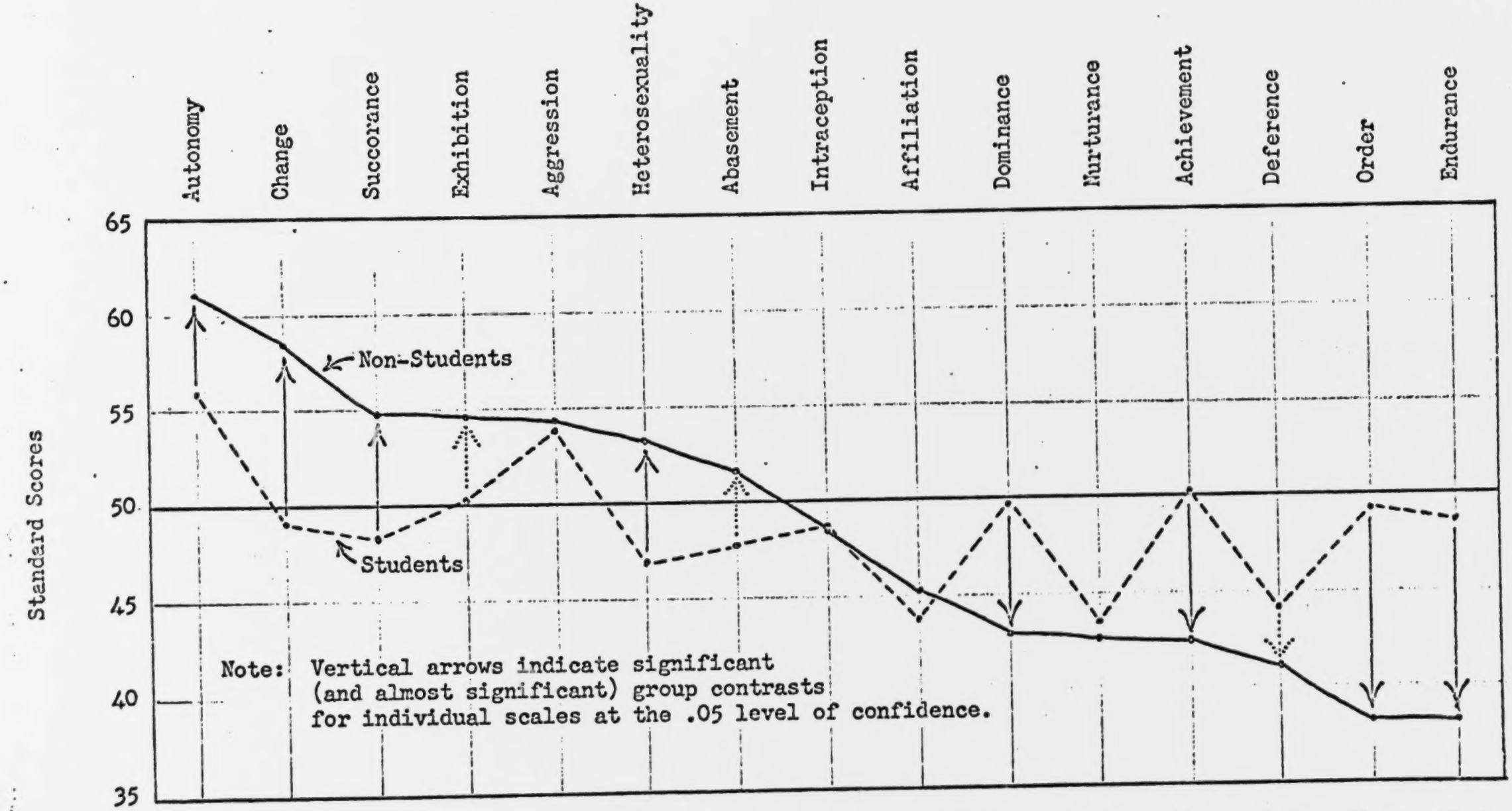
The non-student data, as specifically presented, stresses the fact that tendencies, as McDougall (1937) insisted, remain the indispensable postulates of all psychology. The group portrait of the non-student psychological propensities inherently suggests that such individuals are likely to be predisposed to respond in certain ways. The immediate prognosis for the non-student here studied apparently is one of a prolonged and perhaps stressful identity seeking although the distant future may hold diverse outcomes for individuals within the subculture in conjunction with the maturational effect of the passage of time. Longitudinal research in this area is difficult but needed.

Lastly, aside from the present and future psychological ramifications of personality factors and concomitant nonconformity for the individual, mention much be made that, sociologically, such nonconventionality as represented by the non-students is a factor in the eventual process of social change. Only the deviate can introduce fundamentally new ways into a culture since the introduction of new ways <u>is</u> deviation. Thompson (1967) relates the diverse

and growing non-conformity initiated by youth as a significant social event in American culture. This phenomenon reflects a groping towards alternatives to the prevailing social structure and the norms associated with it. Socity is forced to act and react. The subjects of this research are partial agents of this social adjustment.

FIGURE I

ACL NEED SCALES IN HIERARCHICAL RANK FOR NON-STUDENT GROUP MEANS AS CONTRASTED WITH STUDENT GROUP MEANS:



Non-Student Means:	61.1	58.5	54.9	54.7	54.5	53.1	51.4	48.3	45.1	42.8	42.7	42.5	41.1	38.1	38.0
Student Means:	56.1	49.2	48.5	50.3	54.1	47.1	47.9	48.4	44.0	49.8	43.3	50.1	44.2	49.2	48.7

Data to accompany presentation of paper "Psychological Needs and Nonconformity" by David Whittaker and William A. Watts read at the XI Interamerican Society of Psychology, Mexico City, December 1967.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, D. The man from S.M.O.G. New York Times Magazine, March 20, 1966, 28 ff.

Campbell, E. Q., & Pettigrew, T. F. Racial and moral crisis: the role of Little Rock ministers. Amer. J. Soc., 1959, 64, 509-516.

Gennrich, C. The beat wanderers. Atlas, 1966, 11, 146-151.

Gough, H. G., & Heilbrun, A. B. The adjective check list manual. Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1965.

Kelley, E. C. In defense of youth. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Marasciulo, L. A. Large sample multiple comparisons. Psychol. Bull., 1966, 65, 280-291.

Matza, D. Subterranean traditions of youth. Ann. Amer. Acad. polit. soc. Sci:, 1961, 338, 102-118.

McDougall, W. Tendencies as indispensable postulates of all psychology. In Proc. 11th Internatl. Congr. Psychol.: 1937. Paris: Alcan, 1938.

Murray, H. A. Explorations in personality. New York: Oxford Univer. Press, 1938.

Musgrove, F. Youth and the social order. Bloomington, Ind.: Univer. Press, 1964.

Newcomb. T. M. Student peer-group influence. In N. Sanford (Ed.), The American college. New York: Wiley and Sons, 1962. Pp. 469-488.

Scheffe, H. The analysis of variance. New York: Wiley & Sons, 1959.

Thompson, P. L. The myth of American innocence. Saturday Night, 1967, 82, 26-27.

Watts, W. A., & Whittaker, D. Students of life: a study of the Berkeley non-student. Paper read at Sixth World Cong. Sociol., Evian, France, September 4-11, 1966.